

How Talkspace expands student access to mental health care



Schools, districts, and municipalities increasingly recognize that their teens need additional mental health support. For many schools the number of students seeking help exceeds counselor capacity, and a growing number of students need more intensive or specialized care than schools can provide. CDC data supports the need to increase access to mental health care for teens: 42% of high school students reported feeling very sad or hopeless and 22% seriously considered attempting suicide.

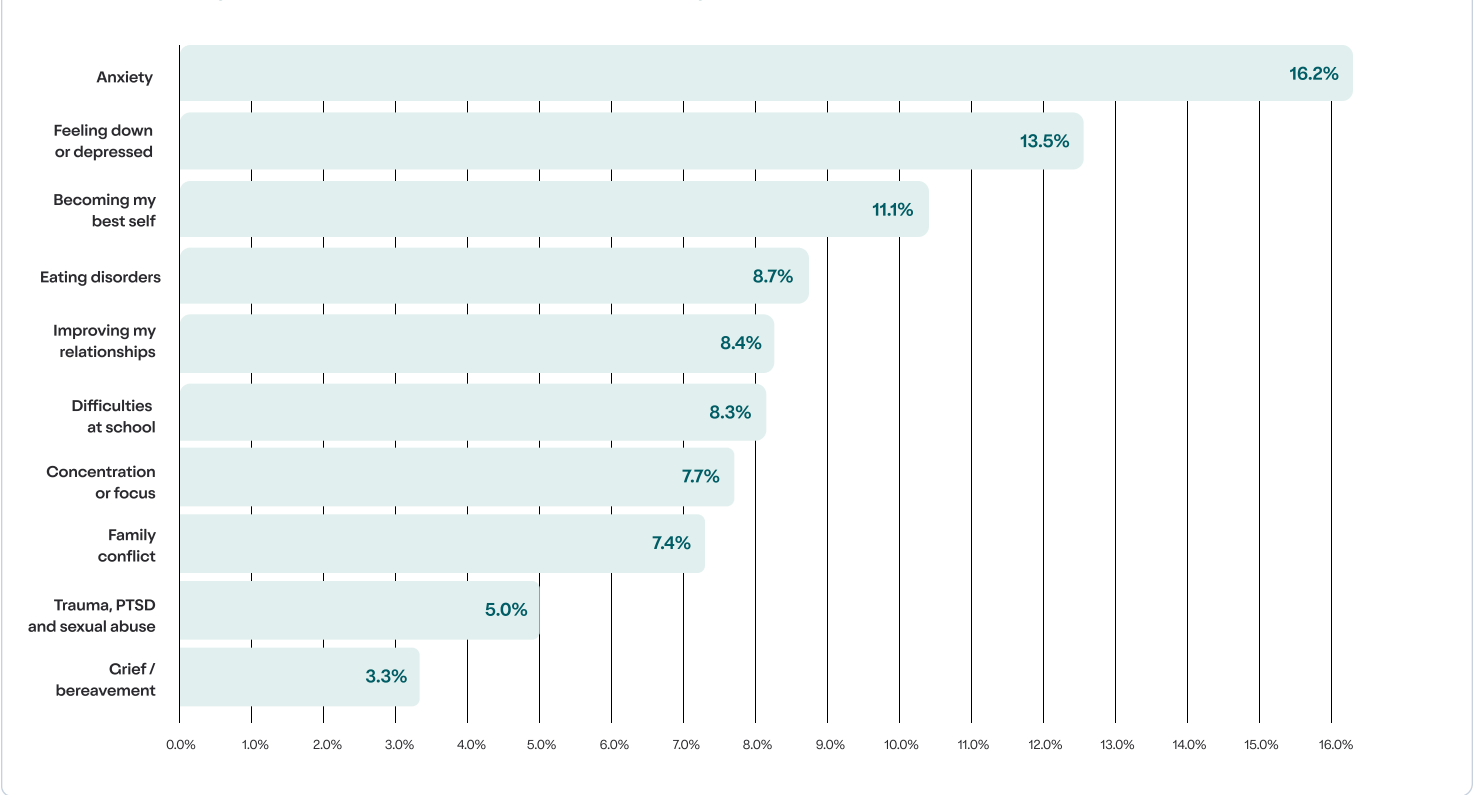
But not only are school counselors overstretched, therapy outside of school is financially out of reach for many teens, and even those who can pay for it find that therapists have months-long wait lists due to a nationwide shortage. To help address the youth mental health crisis, cities and school districts have turned to Talkspace to make evidence-based mental health support available to their teens.

In this case study we'll look at six school districts that have provided their students with additional mental health support by offering any interested student access to a dedicated licensed therapist for unlimited messaging therapy and one live video session per month. We'll share insights from a two-year period (1/1/2022-4/1/2024) on the reasons students seek therapy and their needs and preferences in terms of mental health support.

Reasons why students sign up for Talkspace

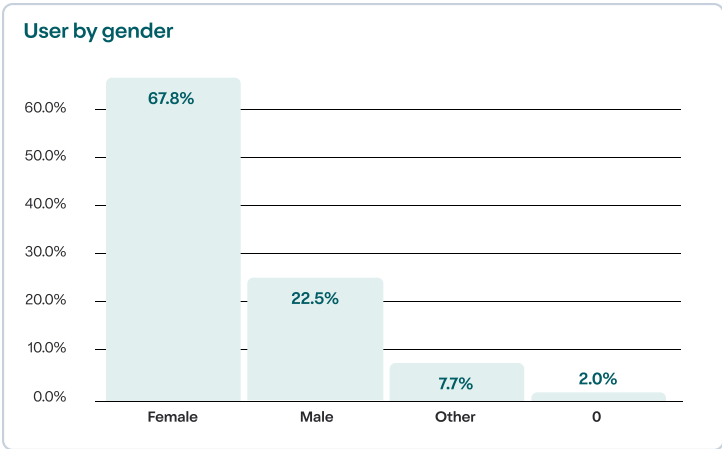
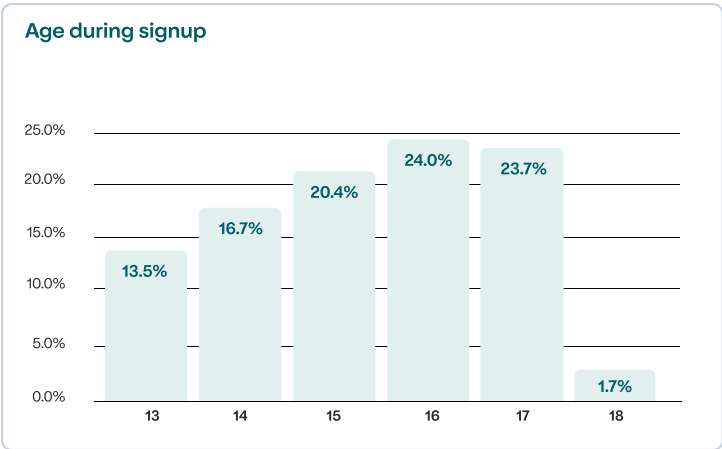
The schools' students 13 and older can sign up for Talkspace services at any time, without a referral or even contact with school counselors. Some seek therapy to address a mental health diagnosis while others simply want support for navigating typical teen life. While anxiety and depression are the top two reasons teens seek support, 11% of students choose "Becoming my best self" as their reason for joining Talkspace. Through Talkspace therapy and Talkspace Co, a self-guided program, students learn tools and techniques to cope with everyday stressors of being a teen.

Registrations by most common presenting problems



The students seeking help

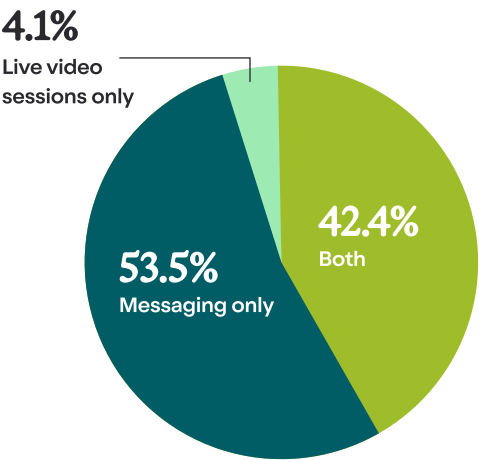
Our data shows students ages 16 and 17 are most likely to sign up for Talkspace, and about three times as many female students using Talkspace as male students, a breakdown that aligns with national trends of women seeking treatment for mental health challenges in higher numbers. Of note, nearly 8% of students seeking care list their gender as “Other,” suggesting that Talkspace is a welcome source of support for students with nonbinary gender identities or who are questioning their gender identities.



How students engage in Talkspace therapy

This graph depicts how students engage in therapy through Talkspace services, illustrating how virtual therapy options meet the needs and preferences of students.

- More than half (54%) of students choose to only use message-based therapy, compared to 4% who only engage in Live Video Sessions.
- 42% of students engage in therapy via both messaging and Live Video Sessions.



How Talkspace partners with school districts

Talkspace supports its partner school districts to ensure the success of their mental health programs. Each district is paired with a dedicated Account Manager to understand the most impactful ways to share the benefit with the school community. Based on the preferences of different school partners, Talkspace has facilitated discussion-based classroom push-ins, hosted webinars for staff, students, and parents, shared pre-recorded training videos, created custom promotional materials, and even held a student poster contest during Mental Health Awareness Month.

The Talkspace team includes subject matter experts who can deliver Mental Health First Aid trainings and workshops on a variety of topics for both staff and students such as setting healthy boundaries, exploring identity, and building healthy coping skills. By putting in effort to understand individual school communities we are able to customize messaging while adhering to best practices in mental health promotion.



Summary

Schools and municipalities can play a vital role in improving youth mental health by offering teens high-quality mental health support with no barriers to entry. By making therapy and other support available to all teens at no cost they can both help those who are struggling with mental health challenges and help the broader population build mental fitness and resilience to prevent problems from developing.

- **Quick access to care:** Our network of licensed therapists who specialize in youth 13+ spans all 50 states, so teens can be paired with a dedicated therapist within days.
- **Student-friendly virtual options:** Teens send their therapists unlimited text, video, or voice messages, and therapists respond five days per week. They can also schedule virtual sessions with their therapists, over video, audio, or live chat.
- **Simple parent consent based on state guidelines:** Parents and guardians consent to their teen's care online.
- **Private and secure:** All therapist-teen communications take place over the secure, encrypted, HIPAA-compliant Talkspace platform.
- **Elevated risk detection:** Although not a crisis line, the Talkspace platform uses machine learning technology to scan de-identified student messages for signs of self-harm risk and, if detected, sends an urgent alert to the student's therapist.

We are having an impact in school communities

"Talkspace hosted a virtual and in person workshop for our 8th grade students here at Waterside School for Leadership. The feedback from our scholars was extremely positive, both during and following the workshops. The scholars expressed feeling comfortable asking questions and also expressed contentment towards the supports being virtual and at no cost to their parents. Waterside appreciates having Talkspace as a community alliance in providing supports for our scholars in need."

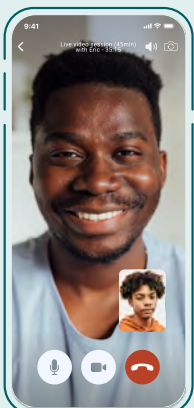
Social Worker, Waterside School for Leadership

"Talkspace has been a valuable asset and tool to help support students and families as they look for quality mental health support. Many of the local mental health providers have 7 to 9 week waitlists before they can see any new clients. Talkspace allows my students to connect with a mental health professional within hours of initiating the need of support."

Assistant Principal of Guidance,
Forest Hills High School

"Talkspace has been vital in helping me normalize mental health treatment discussions with adolescents in the school setting. Because of the stigma associated with mental health in our community most discussions about traditional treatments are met with uneasiness and anxiety. When I mention to students that there's an opportunity to receive help with reducing stress and anxiety by connecting with Talkspace through their cellphones more students are able to connect to treatment because of the familiarity with the modality that the support is being delivered through, the cellphone!"

School Social Worker, The Bronx School for
Law, Government & Justice (X505)



Book a demo

Learn how Talkspace can help support the mental health of your youth population.